

Message Text

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12

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01

SP-02 PM-03 NEA-09 /053 W

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FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4786

INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L CANBERRA 0175

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AS

SUBJECT: LABOR PARTY FEDERAL CONFERENCE REPORTEDLY TO AVOID
CONTENTIOUS ISSUES

REF: CANBERRA 7298

1. IN TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WITH EMBOFF JAN 8 DAVID COMBE, FEDERAL SECRETARY OF ALP, SAID THAT HE HAS SEEN DRAFT REPORT OF DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS PLATFORM SUB-COMMITTEE FOR ALP FEDERAL CONFERENCE IN TERRIGAL, NSW, FEB 3-7. COMBE SAID THERE WAS NOTHING IN IT WHICH SHOULD CAUSE U.S. TROUBLE, THOUGH HE SAID IT WOULD BE VERY "DIFFICULT" TO PROVIDE US WITH COPY OF DRAFT UNTIL SHORTLY BEFORE CONFERENCE BEGINS. ASKED ABOUT ISSUE OF CONSTRUCTION OF OMEGA STATION IN AUSTRALIA, COMBE SAID THIS MATTER WILL CONTINUE TO BE STALLED, AND HE DID NOT RPT NOT ANTICIPATE EARLY DECISION. HE SAID THAT IS IS NOT NECESSARILY HIS IDEA OF HOW TO DEAL WITH A PROBLEM, BUT THE OVERRIDING ALP VIEW ON ALL ISSUES IS DOMINATED BY "STAYING IN GOVERNMENT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE".

2. COMBE SAID THE DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE MIDDLE EAST IS NOT GREATLY CHANGED FROM THE 1973 CONFERENCE BUT WOULD GIVE MORE EMPHASIS TO THE RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE. HE ANTICIPATED A REAL BATTLE OVER ISSUE OF FEDERAL-STATE RELATIONSHIPS IN
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AUSTRALIA.

3. COMMENT: SEEMS CLEAR THAT CURRENTLY UNFAVORABLE ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT SITUATION AND UNCERTAINTIES OVER GENERAL ELECTIONS IN 1975 HAVE TENDED TO DISCOURAGE VENTILATING CONTENTIOUS ISSUES AT CONFERENCE. HOWEVER, ALP "LEFT" WILL BE WELL-REPRESENTED AT CONFERENCE, AND AMENDMENTS TO RELATIVELY BLAND DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS DRAFT COMBE REFERRED TO CAN BE ANTICIPATED. NONETHELESS, PARTY RELUCTANCE TO GET INTO DAMAGING FIGHT DURING WHAT COULD TURN OUT TO BE ANOTHER NATIONAL ELECTIONS YEAR WILL PROBABLY WORK TO ADVANTAGE OF U.S. IN THIS CONTEXT.
GREEN

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